

Work-Related Injury in Montana

Fall 2010

Why are work-related injuries a problem?

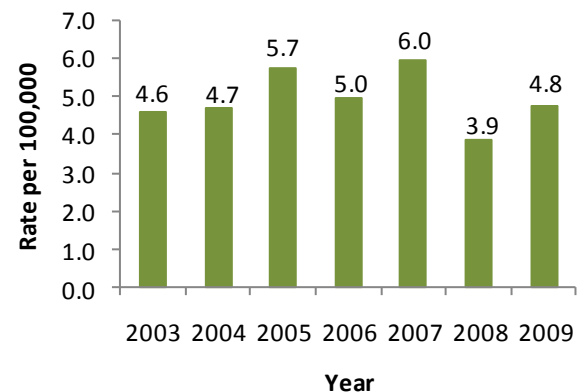
An injury is considered work-related if an event in the work place caused or contributed to the condition, this includes the main work place environment and any other location where employees must be for their employment.¹ Work-related injuries are often preventable, yet in Montana, between 2003 and 2009, 247 deaths were reported as being work related. Work place injury deaths are only a small proportion of all the work related injuries occurring in Montana as thousands of work-related non-fatal injuries occur each year as well. Furthermore, work-related injuries are often underreported.²

Work-related injuries lead to a significant financial burden for the worker and the employer in direct and indirect costs and have been estimated to cost as much or more as major financial impact diseases like cancer, Alzheimer's, and arthritis.³

This report highlights the burden of work-related injury deaths in Montana by looking at death certificate data where an injury occurring at work is indicated in the underlying cause of death. It also includes a brief note regarding non-fatal injuries at work.

- The rate of work-related injury death in Montana in 2009 was 4.8 deaths/100,000 people 18 years and older (Figure 1).
- Montana ranked number two in the nation for work-related injuries in 2007.⁴

Figure 1. Rate of work-related injury deaths* among people 18 and older, 2003-2009, Montana



* See methods and limitations for more information

By lowering the work-related injury rate to the national level, Montana could save **\$145 million** each year.⁴

Who dies from an injury at work?

- The majority of work-related injury deaths are among men (Figure 2).
- Work-related injury deaths do not occur disproportionately among races compared to their relative proportion of the state population (Figure 2).
- Over 1/4 of work-related injury deaths are among people 45-54 years old (Figure 2).
- In Montana, people working as truckers and other drivers account for the highest proportion of work-related injury deaths (Table 1).

Figure 2. Work-related injury deaths by selected characteristics, 2003-2009, Montana

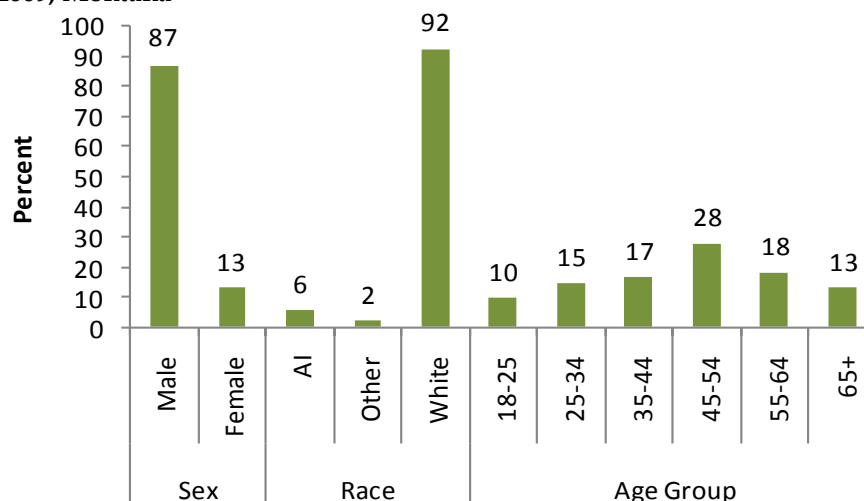


Table 1. Percent of work-related injury deaths by profession, 2003-2009, Montana

Profession*	Percent of total work -related injury deaths
Trucker/Driver/Delivery	18.4
Construction/Carpenter/Trade	14.8
Rancher/Farmer	14.4
Business Related	11.2
Laborer	3.6
Logger/Sawyer	3.6
Pilot	3.2
Police	3.2
Lineman	2.8
Administrative Position	2.4
Health	2.0
Mechanic	2.0
Other	18.4

*Similar professions were combined. Results are dependent on coding of profession at the time of death

Table 2. Cause of unintentional work-related injury death, 2003-2009, Montana

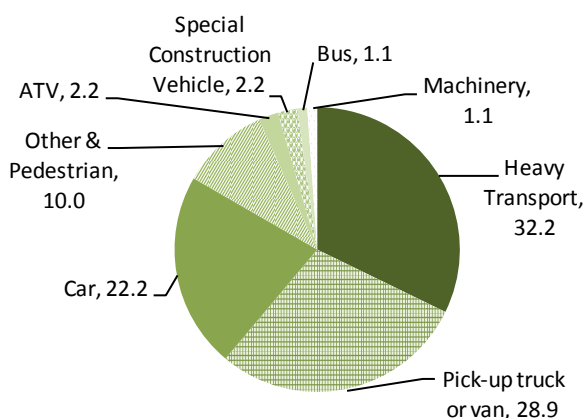
<i>Cause</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Motor Vehicle Crash, traffic	36
Fall	11
Machinery, non vehicular	8
Other land transport, non traffic (All terrain vehicle, Machinery)	8
Other (Explosion, sequelae of MVC, events not elsewhere classified)	6
Other transport (Aircraft, Helicopter)	5
Struck by/against	5
Firearm	4
Poisoning	4
Electrocution	3
Suffocation	3
Pedestrian, non traffic	2
Natural/environment	2
Cut/Pierce	<1
Drowning	<1
Fire/Flame	<1

About **3/4** of non-fatal injuries at work in 2008 resulted in at least one day of missed work.⁵

What types of injuries occur at work?

While 6% of work-related injury deaths in Montana are classified as intentional (5% suicide and 1% homicide), most are unintentional (data not shown). The most common type of work-related injury is a traffic related motor vehicle crash (MVC) accounting for over 1/3 of all work-related deaths (Table 2). Of those MVC deaths, about 1/3 are related to heavy transport vehicles (Figure 3).

Figure 3. Type of vehicle involved in work-related MVC deaths, 2003-2009, Montana



Non-fatal injuries at work

In 2008, about 8,900 non-fatal injuries were reported to have occurred at work (private sector alone). The most common non-fatal injury at work in Montana was a sprain or strain (45%) followed by soreness/pain (14%), cut/laceration (8%) and fractures (6%).⁵ The occupations with the highest percent of non-fatal injuries at work were laborers, stock, freight & material movers followed by nursing aides, orderlies, and attendants; construction workers; carpenters; heavy transport truck drivers; and light or delivery service truck drivers.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Montana has one of the highest work-related injury death rates in the nation. Work-related injuries come at a high cost to businesses and quality of life for injured individuals. Some occupations account for more work related injury deaths than do others. Substantial effort, including more thorough surveillance, will be needed to decrease the disturbingly high work-related injury death rate in Montana.

For more information contact the Montana Injury Prevention program at: bperkins@mt.gov, 406-444-4126. For more work-related injury statistics and information please see the Department of Labor and Industry's website at: www.ourfactsyourfuture.org

Methods and Limitations

The data presented here are from the Montana Office of Vital Statistics (OVS) unless otherwise noted. Data were included from deaths occurring between 2003 and 2009 with a 'Yes' response to the question 'injury occurred at work'. These data may not be as comprehensive as other data sources due to coding at the time of death certificate certification.

References:

- Occupational Safety and Health Administration. Forms for Recording Work-Related Injuries and Illnesses. Accessed at: www.osha.gov
- Government Accountability Office. Workplace safety and health: enhancing OSHA's records audit process could improve the accuracy of worker injury and illness data. October 15, 2009: GAO-10-10. Accessed at: <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-10-10>
- 'Costs of Occupational Injuries and Illnesses.' Frontline. Accessed at: <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/workplace/etc/cost.html>
- Work Safe Montana. What it costs you. Accessed at: www.worksafemt.com
- Montana Department of Labor and Industry. Montana Occupational Injuries and Illnesses. Accessed at: <http://www.ourfactsyourfuture.org/?PAGEID=67&SUBID=141>